



Prayer and Liturgy Policy



Approved by: Directors

Last reviewed on: To be agreed (Prepared January 2023)

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Introduction

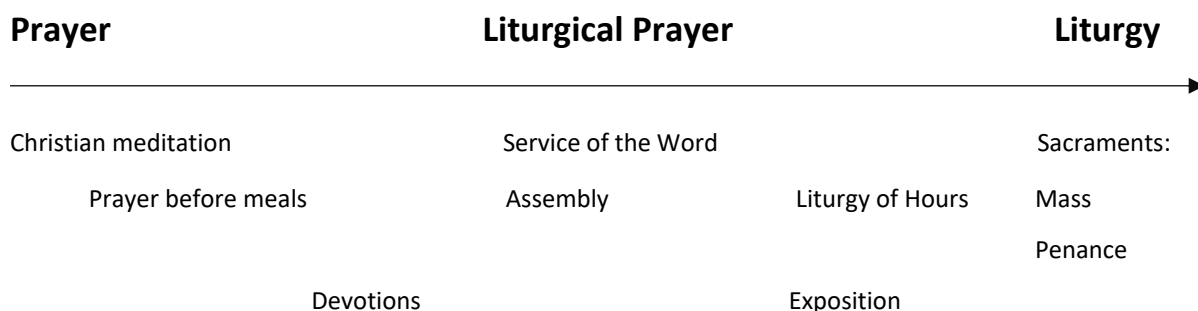
Understanding Prayer and Liturgy

(From the draft Prayer and Liturgy Directory, September 2022)

In any school there will be a range of prayer and liturgy: classroom prayer, meditation, assemblies, devotions, special services for times in the school year, celebrations of Mass and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Each form of prayer and liturgy will have its own character dependent on the circumstances, size and age of the group, the place of celebration and its content.

Definition of Terms

Prayer, Liturgical Prayer, and Liturgy form a continuum with silent meditation at one end and a celebration of Mass on a Solemnity of the Church (e.g., Ascension of the Lord) at the other. Of course, there are areas of overlap between the categories.



Prayer	Liturgical Prayer	Liturgy
Simple structure	Structured (often 4 part)	Taken from official books
One or two elements	Elements drawn from liturgy	Complex structure
Balance of familiarity & creativity	Places of Scripture	Many elements
	Contrasts and creativity	Range of ministry

In Catholic terminology ‘worship’ is not generally used to name and describe a distinct type of prayer or event. Worship is about living our lives in a way that recognises that everything we have is a gift from God and that everything we do gives glory to God. That, of course, does include prayer but the scope is broader. With that understanding of worship it will be seen that that the purpose of education in a Catholic school is to know and love Christ and to open the vision and imagination of all pupils to the wonder of living in God’s world and the responsibilities that follow from this.

Under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 there is a statutory duty to inspect and report on denominational education (that is religious education) and collective worship in schools designated as having a religious character. For this reason, the term 'Collective Worship' has been kept as the headline judgement by the Catholic Schools Inspectorate but throughout the framework it is referred to as prayer and liturgy. This model policy addresses the shift in vocabulary and is an interim response to the draft Prayer and Liturgy Directory. When the Directory is published it will contain a model policy.

Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Academy Trust Prayer and Liturgy Policy

Mission Statement

As a family of schools, inspired by Our Lady Immaculate, we flourish, we love, and we aspire to be who God has called us to be.

Our Vision:

Rooted in the teaching of our Holy Church and expressed in the Gospels as a MAT we look to Mary Immaculate as the perfect inspiration. With Christ at our centre:

1 We strive to be beacons of faith and excellence in Catholic Education. We strive to take children from where they are at so that they have the courage to respond to what God is calling them to be.

John 10 1-10 "I have come that you may have life and have it to the full."

2 We seek to provide schools of hospitality and welcome so that partnerships are strong and faithful with parents and our communities. We seek to develop global citizens who are able to become stewards of God's creation.

"Education is an act of hope that from the present looks to the future" Pope Francis

3 We commit to tending to the needs of the whole child with care and diligence so that whatever the starting point our children can achieve standards of excellence in all settings through academic rigour with strong and caring staff who know them individually.

Isaiah 43.1 "I have called you by your name you are mine."

4 We encourage the spirit of individuality among our schools within the structures of the MAT, where communities are vibrant, diverse welcoming and compassionate to all.

Acts of the Apostles 10.34 "The truth I have come to realise is that God does not have favourites"

5 We expect a leadership of service and kindness as a hallmark of all our schools. Providing opportunities for growth in leadership is vital at all levels.

John 13: 14 "I your Lord and teacher have just washed your feet. You then should wash each other's feet"

The Nature of Prayer and Liturgy

Prayer and liturgy in a Catholic school names and celebrates God's presence in our lives. It is concerned with giving glory, honour, praise and thanks to God. It is our loving response, in word and action, to God's invitation to enter into relationship, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit.

'The celebration of Catholic liturgies and prayers as an integral part of the learning and teaching should enable the school community to become reflective, experience the presence of God and should develop a mature spiritual life.'¹

Legal Requirements

It is a legal requirement that there is a daily 'act of worship' offered for all pupils. This can take place at any time during the school day and can be either a single 'act of worship' for all pupils, or separate 'acts of worship' in school groups. Holding an assembly that includes a prayer, said either by the teacher or everyone present, does not fulfil this requirement. Prayer, liturgical prayer and assembly are distinct activities which can contribute to this.

The 'act of worship' is not designated curriculum time under regulations and will not be subsumed under any part of the curriculum, including religious education. Responsibility for arranging prayer and liturgy lies with the Governing Body after consultation with the Head Teacher.

Parents have a right to withdraw their child from 'Collective Worship'. However, given the importance of prayer and liturgy in a Catholic school, parents and prospective parents will be made aware of the fact that it can never be confined to 'timetabled slots' but may take place in a variety of contexts other than those which are specifically structured, within Come and See RE curriculum.

The Place of Prayer and Liturgy in the Life of Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Academy Trust

Prayer and liturgy is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition.

¹ Christ at the Centre Rev Marcus Stock, 2005

Prayer and liturgy takes into account the religious and educational needs of all who share in it:

- Those who form part of the worshipping community in church;
- Those for whom school may be their first and only experience of church;
- Those from other Christian traditions – or none;
- Those from other faith backgrounds.

The Aims of Prayer and Liturgy

Prayer and liturgy in Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Academy Trust aims to provide opportunities for all pupils and staff:

- To contemplate the mystery of God
- To reflect on spiritual and moral issues
- To explore personal beliefs
- To respond to and to celebrate life
- To experience a sense of belonging and to develop community spirit
- To develop a common ethos and shared values
- To enrich religious experience
- To grow in liturgical understanding and development
- To pray using prayers which are part of the Catholic tradition
- To reinforce positive attitudes
- To participate fully
- To take time out ‘to wonder at’, ‘to come to terms with’ and ‘to give worth to.’

Principles

All acts of prayer in Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Academy Trust Schools will:

- Give glory and honour to God;
- Be a quality activity, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character;
- Enable pupils to develop skills so that they can prepare, organise and lead prayer times;
- Give pupils positive liturgical experiences, appropriate to their age, aptitude and family backgrounds in order to prepare them for the liturgical life of the Church.² Celebrations will be appropriate to the age and groupings of the children.

² Directory for Masses with Children, paragraph 9.

Planning, content and celebration

Prayer and liturgy is planned following a structure with reference to the Church's seasons, Come and See, feast days, the curriculum and significant dates e.g. CAFOD Family Fast Day, Holocaust Memorial Day.

Parish and parents are invited to participate in some celebrations.

A variety of prayer styles will be used appropriate to the age of the children and the occasion.

The frequency and planning of prayer and worship opportunities will be co-ordinated by the Head Teacher and the Prayer and Liturgy Co-ordinator and will include a daily "act of worship"

The Timetable of Prayer and Liturgy will be arranged through each calendar month by each of the schools to ensure that the liturgical highlights of the year are celebrated.

Leading Prayer and Liturgy

As faith leader of the school, the Head Teacher will plan and lead prayer and liturgy alongside the SLT and the Prayer and Liturgy Co-ordinator (In the case of Secondary Schools this may be delegated). The class teacher/Form Teacher will lead class prayer and liturgy. Children/Young people are taught to plan and lead prayer times according to their age.

Recording

Prayer and liturgy is recorded in the Prayer and Liturgy File/ or similarly collated.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Prayer and liturgy is monitored using the prayer and liturgy monitoring form and is reviewed at planning meetings. Updates on the Liturgical events of the year are reported to Governors at each meeting.

Following monitoring, training needs will be identified and outcomes used to inform the school's CSED (Catholic Schools Evaluation Document).

Resources

Resources are kept maintained within school by the Prayer and Liturgy Co-ordinator.

The learning environment

'Symbols and icons of the Catholic faith when displayed in schools and throughout its premises will help the school community and visitors to experience the uniqueness and sacredness of this learning environment'³

³ Christ at the Centre Rev Marcus Stock, 2005

Focal points in each classroom and throughout the schools will reflect the liturgical season and will reference Come and See/Secondary RE Diocesan recommended syllabus (Until the Catholic Directory is published) topics. In this way they will be an outward sign of the school's ethos.

Retreats

Each of the schools in the MAT will endeavour to plan Retreat experiences for their school communities. Again these events will be reported to the Governing Body.

Other opportunities

All opportunities for Prayer and Worship will be collated and used to inform SEF judgements. In some OLICAT Schools Sacramental preparation programmes exist within school rather than the Parish. This will be carefully planned and reviewed with the Parishes served by the schools.

Eucharist

All opportunities in our schools for the celebration of the Eucharist will be done in consultation with the Prayer and Liturgy Co-ordinator and the Priest presiding. All students will carefully be prepared for this before the celebration.

The Coordinator for Prayer and Liturgy

Each school will have a co-ordinator of Prayer and Liturgy, this will usually be the person with Chaplaincy responsibility but may in some cases be the Head Teacher.

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator and is evaluated and reviewed by the whole school staff and governors every two years. The Foundation Governors in particular will play a most important role.

Appendix 1

The Role of the Coordinator for Prayer and Liturgy

- Formulating a written policy for prayer and liturgy
- Ensuring that there is a development plan for prayer and liturgy included in the school development plan
- Ensuring that prayer and liturgy is appropriate to the age, aptitudes and faith backgrounds of pupils
- Ensuring that prayer and liturgy takes account of the religious and educational needs of all who share in it and is rooted in the principles of the 'Directory for Masses with Children'

- Organising themes for prayer times
- Assisting the governors and Head Teacher to carry out their legal responsibilities with regard to prayer and liturgy including withdrawal from Collective Worship
- Developing staff confidence and expertise e.g. through modelling different prayer styles

Planning, recording, monitoring and evaluating

- Maintaining and developing effective procedures and documentation
- Observing Acts of Prayer and Liturgy and providing feedback
- Informing the Head Teacher of standards and developments in prayer and liturgy

Communication

- Communicating to members of the school community the significance and content of prayer and liturgy
- Reporting to and consulting with the governors and Head Teacher regarding matters of concern and development
- Acting as consultant to colleagues
- Encouraging positive attitudes towards prayer and liturgy
- Informing newly appointed colleagues of school policy regarding prayer and liturgy
- Communicating with parents, governors and the parish community
- Liaison with the school chaplain
- Liaison with the Diocesan Education Service

Professional development/Ongoing formation

- Leading and organising in-service training and ongoing formation for prayer and liturgy
- Attending appropriate in-service courses, reporting back and leading staff training
- Keeping up to date by personal reading

Resources

- Evaluating existing resources
- Developing the resources available for prayer and liturgy including visual aids, artefacts, drapes, music, visitors, leaders, new and relevant books, posters etc.
- Budgeting efficiently

[Consideration should be given to the establishment of a planning group, which might include, the coordinator, the Head Teacher, deputy, staff, pupils, governors and school chaplain. It would be part of the role of the coordinator to lead this group.]